The Perceived Role of Social Media Among Career Practitioners

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Finnish Institute for Educational Research (FIER)

- National Center for LLG expertise
- National task force:
  - Targeted research for lifelong guidance practice and policy development
- Co-ordination of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) 2007-2012
- National and international conferences
  - 1st European Lifelong Guidance Policy Conference 2006
  - IAEVG 2009
Previous Research/ literature

Internet in guidance

- Information source, Interaction among clients and guidance professionals (Bimrose & Barnes, 2010; Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005; Offer & Chiru, 2005; Watts 2002; Sampson 2008; Vuorinen, 2006)
- Material development (Barnes, La Gro & Watts, 2010; Vuorinen 2006), automated interaction, games and simulations (Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts 2010).
- Facilitation and management the overwhelming amount of information. (Sampson, Shy, Offer & Dozier 2010).
Guidance in Internet

- Delivery of information, material development, automated interaction or a channel for communication (Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts 2010; Vuorinen 2006, Sampson 2008; Watts & Offer 2006).

- Applications with or without automated interaction. Generic counselling processes to help clients make effective use of ICT in career guidance (Sampson 2008).

- “Careering” through the web (Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts 2010).

**Gap:** Due to the novelty of use of social media in career services there has been little research describing the conceptions of career practitioners
"Social media is a process, where individuals and groups build up a common understanding and meanings with contents, communities and web 2.0 technology."

Sources: Kangas et al. (2007) and Ahlqvist et al (2010)
Defining the social media

“form of communication which makes use of information networks and information technology and deals with content created by users in an interactive way and in which interpersonal relationships are created and maintained”

Source: Finnish Terminology Center (2010)
Aim of the study

The main aim is to discover and describe the qualitatively different ways in which career practitioners conceptualize the target phenomenon.

The particular study questions were framed as follows:

1. What are the career practitioners conceptions of social media?
2. What are the critical aspects that differentiate between qualitatively varying ways of understanding the phenomenon?
Method

- Phenomenographic research

- Investigates the qualitatively different ways in which people at collective level experience or conceptualize the target phenomenon (Marton and Booth, 1997; Marton and Pong, 2005; Åkerlind, 2005; 2012)

- The result is the identification of categories of description in which the different ways of conceiving the phenomenon are hierarchically and logically interrelated, and hence the establishment of a typology (Ashworth and Lucas, 1998).
Data

- collected using focus group interview methodology
- 15 career practitioners (14 women, 1 man), who were experienced Internet users but novices on the social media
  - practitioners represented Finnish guidance community from lifelong guidance perspective (comprehensive, secondary and higher education as well Public Employment Services)
- analyzed using phenomenographical data analysis methods
### Results

Career practitioners’ conceptions of social media in career services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unnecessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance locus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance paradigm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of practitioner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Category 1: Social media in career services is unnecessary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Guidance Locus</th>
<th>Role of practitioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative; not relevant</td>
<td>threat to the profession and to the practice</td>
<td>supplier driven, time and space specific</td>
<td>expert role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Guidance Paradigm</td>
<td>Nature of interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The everyday setting for young peoples live</td>
<td>not acknowledged</td>
<td>emphasizing the individual face to face career services</td>
<td>practitioner to individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Category 2: Social media in career services is dispensable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>sceptical; passing fad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>challenge, difficult to comprehend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Locus</td>
<td>supplier driven, time specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of practitioner</td>
<td>advising role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>The setting for creating and sustaining connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>information delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of interaction</td>
<td>practitioner to individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Category 3: Social media in career services is a possibility

**Attitude**
unsure; potentially useful means

**Perception**
creates a need to change the accustomed ways to do work

**Setting**
The setting for discussions

**Opportunities**
initiate communication

**Guidance Locus**
demand driven, time specific

**Guidance paradigm**
Individual and group guidance

**Role of practitioner**
supporting role

**Nature of interaction**
practitioner with individual
### Category 4: Social media in career services is desirable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Guidance Locus</th>
<th>Role of practitioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>positive; complementary tool</td>
<td>reality, not as a substitute but as a complement</td>
<td>citizen/user-centred, time specific</td>
<td>reflexive role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Guidance paradigm</td>
<td>Nature of interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the setting for reflective thought</td>
<td>support gain from peers</td>
<td>Individual and group (with or without practitioner)</td>
<td>practitioner with individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>individual with peers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Category 5: Social media in career services is indispensable**

**Attitude**
Positive/excited; way to extend service

**Perception**
Positive potential, increasingly important way to extend career services

**Setting**
The setting for people processing on their life

**Opportunities**
Knowledge from peers and others

**Guidance**
Locus
citizen/user-centred

**Guidance paradigm**
Self-help approach; group (without or with practitioner)

**Role of practitioner**
one resource among others on individuals life

**Nature of interaction**
individual with community members

individual to practitioner
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Variation</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Unnecessary</th>
<th>Dispensable</th>
<th>Possibility</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
<th>Indispensable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td>negative; not relevant</td>
<td>skeptical; passing fad</td>
<td>unsure; potentially useful means</td>
<td>positive; complementary tool</td>
<td>positive/excited; way to extend service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td>The everyday setting for creating and sustaining connections</td>
<td>The setting for discussions</td>
<td>The setting for reflective thought</td>
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<td>initiate communication</td>
<td>support gain from peers</td>
<td>knowledge from peers and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td></td>
<td>threat</td>
<td>challenge</td>
<td>change</td>
<td>reality</td>
<td>positive potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>practitioner (individual)</td>
<td>practitioner (individual)</td>
<td>practitioner (individual)</td>
<td>practitioner (individual)</td>
<td>individual (community members)</td>
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<td>supplier driven, time specific</td>
<td>demand driven, time specific</td>
<td>citizen/user-centred, time specific</td>
<td>citizen/user-centred</td>
</tr>
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<td>Guidance paradigm</td>
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<td>Individual face to face guidance</td>
<td>Individual guidance</td>
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<td>Individual and group (with or without practitioner)</td>
<td>Self-help approach</td>
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<td>reflexive role</td>
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Discussion

In general, it was possible to see the expansion of collective awareness of critical aspects, especially in regarding the following aspects:

- **The attitude**: opening up from negative, not relevant to positive/excited and a way to extend service;
- **The settings**: from everyday setting for young peoples live to a setting where people process their lives;
- **The opportunities**: opening up from `not acknowledged´ to not only `information delivery and communication channel, but also towards knowledge available from peers and others;
- **Perception**: from threat to a positive potential.
Discussion (continued)

- expansion of collective awareness of critical aspects:
  - Guidance locus: from supplier driven, time and space specific to citizen/user-centered
  - Guidance paradigm: from individual face to face guidance to groups (with or without practitioner) and self-help approach
  - Role of practitioner: from expert role to one resource among others on individuals life
  - Nature of interaction: from `practitioner to individual´ to interaction between all community members
Key questions for consideration

- What are the implications for training, research and policy development?
Future research

Skills and Competencies Needed

Guidance in Social media

Social media in Guidance

Role of Social media in guidance

How do we most effectively train
Further information

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